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CHRISTMAS

AND

THE NEW YEAR:

A MASQUE,

FOR

THE FIRE-SIDE.



1827.

—♦—
PRICE TWO SHILLINGS.

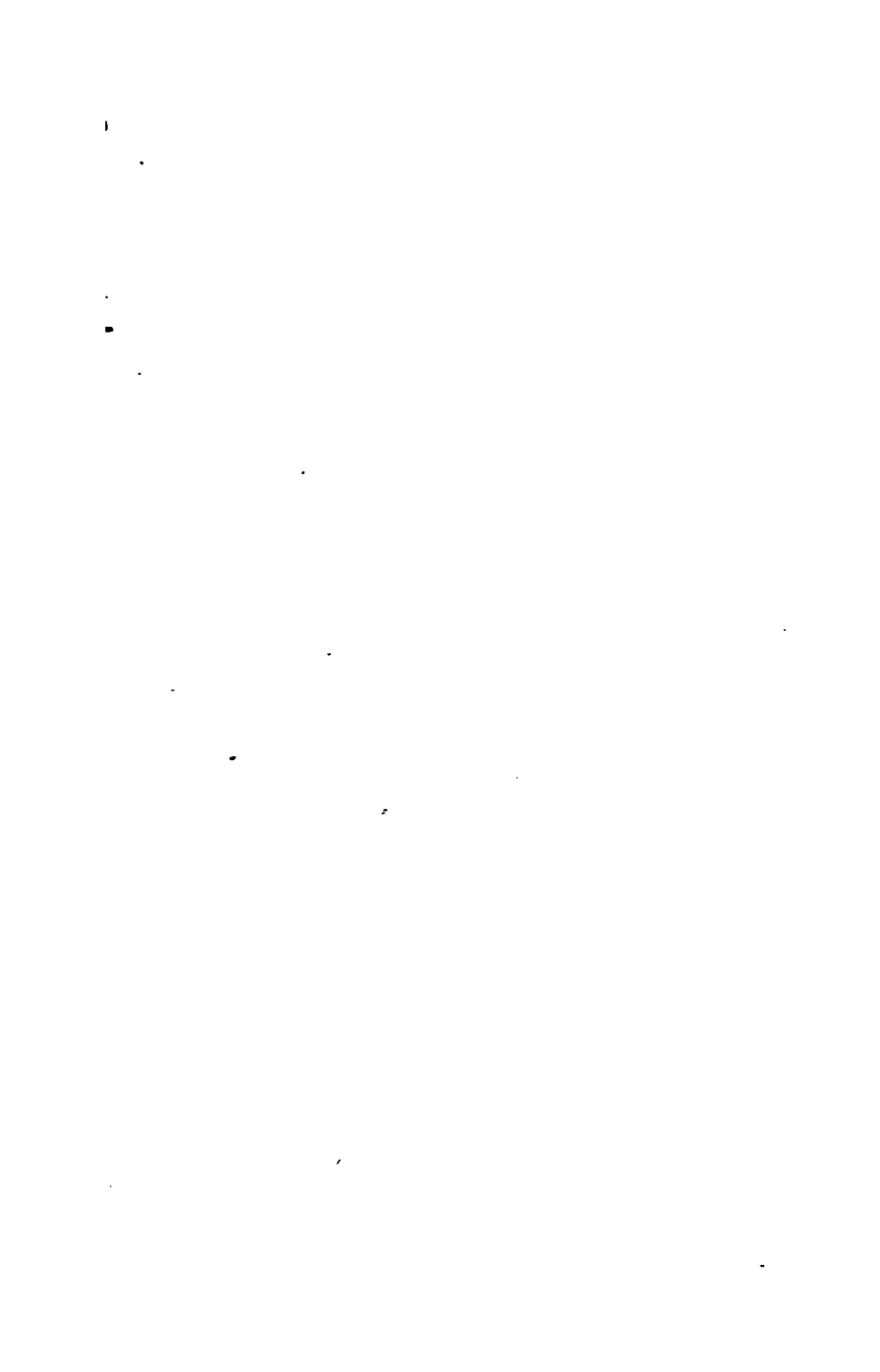
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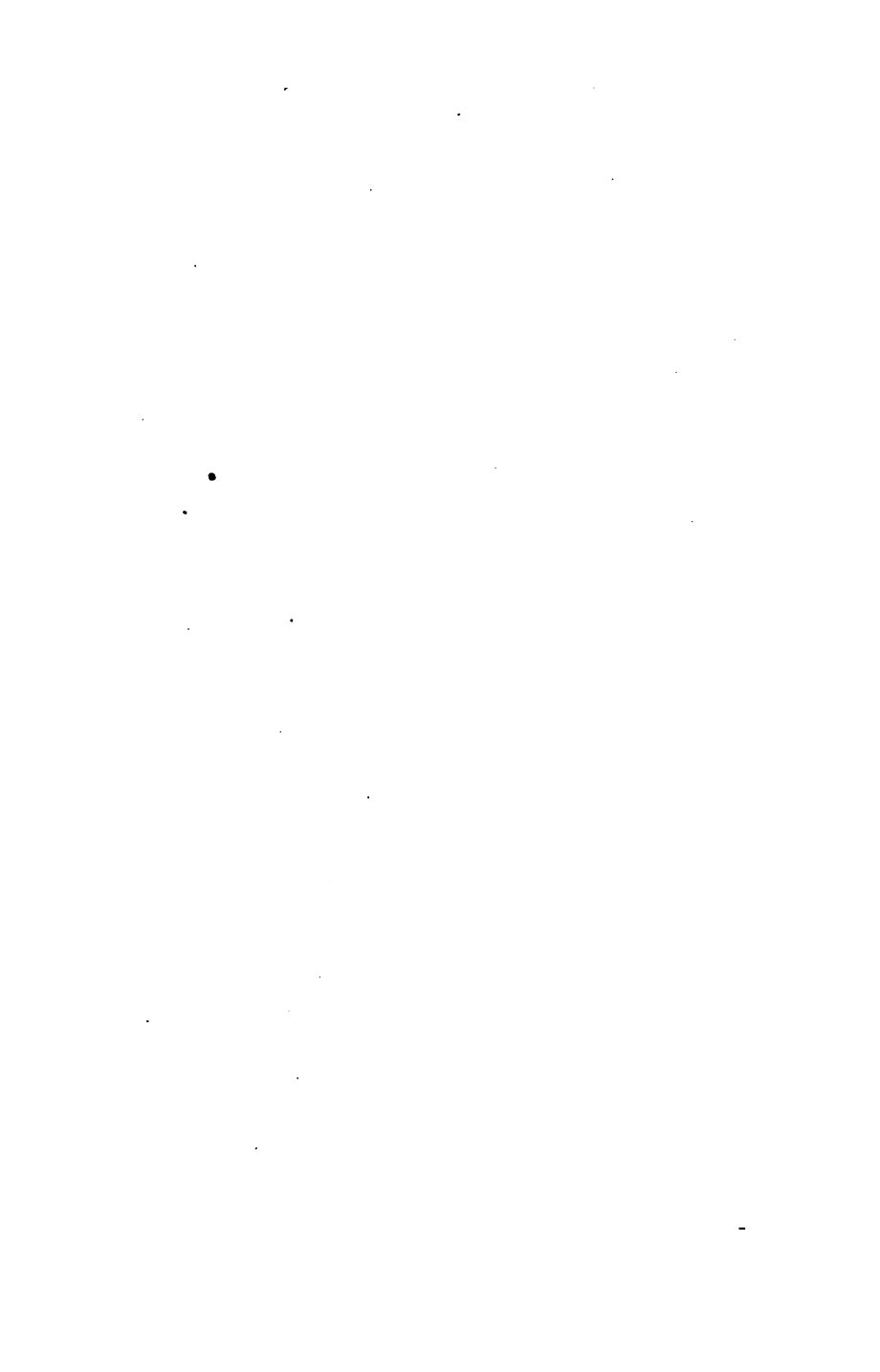
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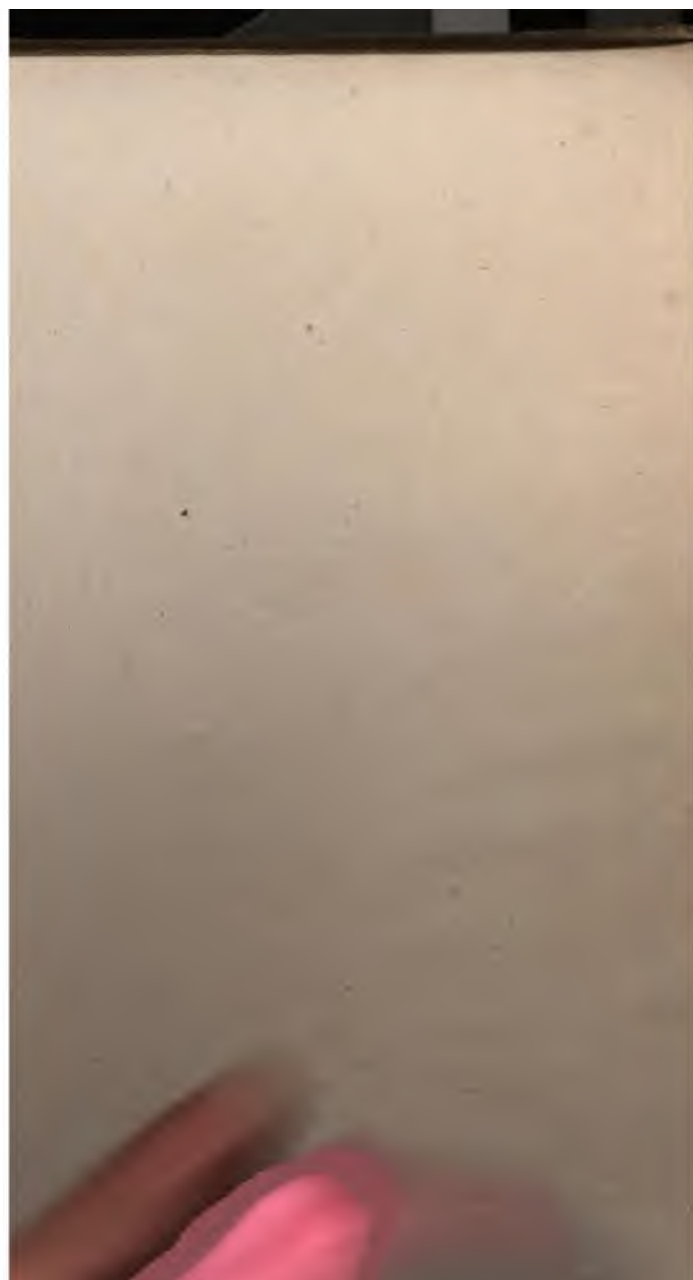


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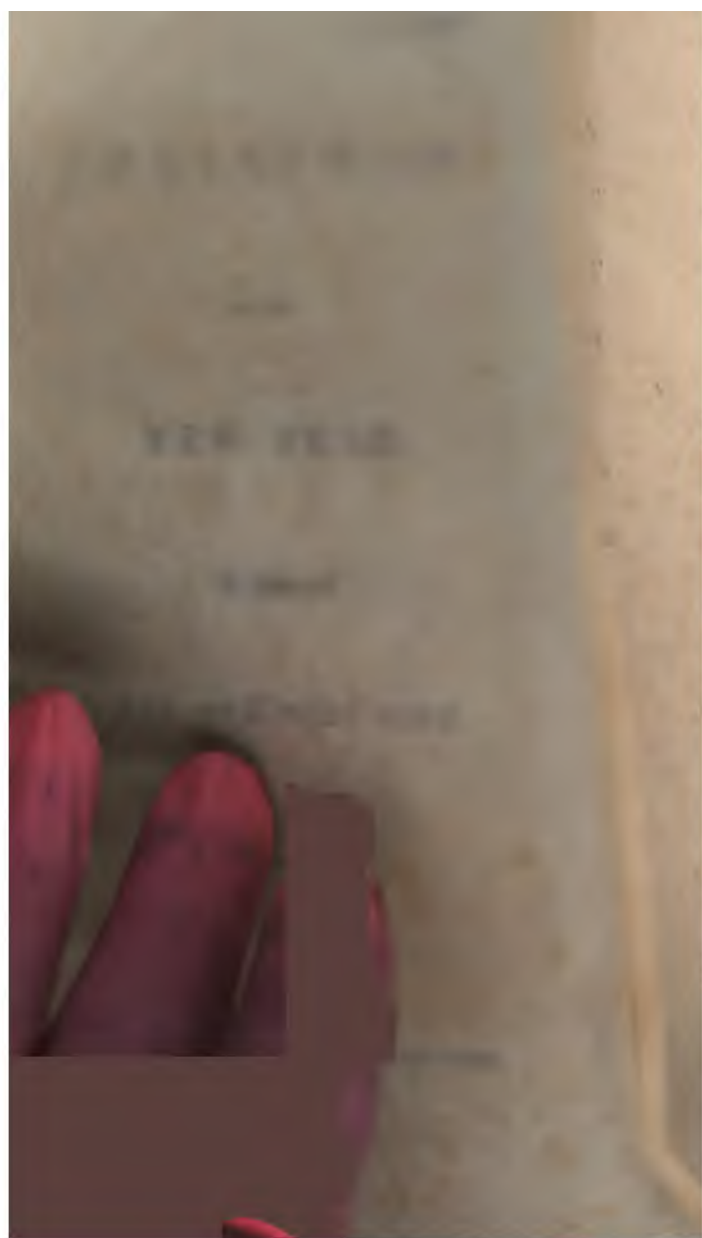














J. H. 1827.

✓

C H R I S T M A S

AND THE

NEW YEAR:

A Masque,

FOR THE FIRE-SIDE.

•
LONDON:

LONGMAN, REES, ORME, BROWN, AND GREEN.

1827.

141.

[Entered at Stationers' Hall.]



E. LEES, PRINTER, WORCESTER.

“Heap on more wood !—the wind is chill ;
But let it whistle as it will,
We'll keep our *Christmas* merry still.—
Each age has deem'd the new-born year
The fittest time for festal cheer.

* * * * *

And well our Christian sires of old
Lov'd when the year its course had roll'd,
And brought blithe *Christmas* back again,
With all his hospitable train.

* * * * *

All hail'd with uncontroll'd delight,
And general voice, the happy night,
That to the cottage, as the crown,
Brought tidings of salvation down.”

WALTER SCOTT.



TO HER,

FOR THE AMUSEMENT OF WHOSE

FIRE-SIDE,

This Trifle

WAS ORIGINALLY COMPOSED,

IT IS NOW

AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED,

BY THE AUTHOR,

Ah! think not I could ever part
From thee without a pang;
Too closely twined around my heart
Affection's tendrils hang:
The sweet returning evening hour
That now beguiles me so,
Would cease to have its magic pow'r
Were your kind form to go!

At your bright glance awakes delight,
Beneath your smile we glow;
But ah! 'twould be a dreary night
Were your kind form to go!
The joyous laugh, the brisk reply,
Would all be dormant then,
And young excursive gaiety
Must ne'er awake again.

Come, let me be for once a seer,
And quickly I'll presage,
That days of brighter tints appear
On time's eventful page:
But were they rob'd in moody frowns,
We'd chase those frowns away,
And wreath affliction's stem with crowns
Of flow'rets young and gay.

Then bow not to pale sorrow's sway,
But lift the languid head;
Shake the o'erpow'ring drops away,
And leave depression's bed:
May health her freshest breezes fling,
To brighten up your hours;
And pleasing memory ever bring
Her reminiscent pow'rs.

If tir'd of earth's fantastic show,
You seek another land;
Ah! linger yet awhile below,
Amidst our little band;
That we may catch your glance of love,
And learn like you to soar
To far superior joys above,
Where sorrow is no more.

CHRISTMAS AND THE NEW YEAR,

&c.

ACT I.

*Scene.—A long avenue of leafless lime trees, with
an antique mansion at its extremity.*

CHORUS OF BOYS.

Welcome, CHRISTMAS, welcome, mirth!
Welcome to the blazing hearth!
Welcome to the joys of home!
Long expected CHRISTMAS—come!

Care not for the driving snow,
Care not for the frost below;
Come beneath the shelt'ring dome;
Long expected CHRISTMAS—come!

Speed along the slipp'ry slide,
With the quiv'ring snow-flake glide;
From your long excursive roam,
Welcome to our happy home!

Welcome, CHRISTMAS! welcome, mirth!
 Welcome to the blazing hearth!
 Welcome to the joys of home!
 Long expected CHRISTMAS—come!

Scene changes to a room within the mansion.

CHORUS OF GIRLS.

Maidens, now your skill attest,
 Ev'ry hand prepare the feast;
 Rich plum pudding, sweet mince pie,
 For our youthful company.

Haste! for in a chaise and four,
 With white snow-flakes powder'd o'er,
 And a gorgeous livery'd train,
 CHRISTMAS hastens o'er the plain.

His arrival now to greet,
 We prepare this luscious treat;
 Brothers, cousins, all are here,
 To partake the mirthful cheer.

Maidens, now your skill attest,
 Ev'ry hand prepare the feast;
 Rich plum pudding, sweet mince pie,
 For our youthful company.

Scene 3rd.—A leafless wood. The Old Year in the attire of a Laplander, appears seated on the ground, beneath an umbrageous oak, that yet retains a few brown leaves. A wood fire is burning beside him.

OLD YEAR.

Here will I sit my few remaining days,
 And yield my breath among these aged groves.
 How solemn! yet how desolate the scene!
 All nature seems to mourn the ravages
 Of wint'ry desolation; trees despoil'd
 Of their fair foliage, look decay'd and dead;
 Mute are the tuneful warblers—silence reigns!
 Save when the howling blast tempestuous sounds,
 And the fierce winds, impatient of controul,
 And must'ring all their forces from the north,
 Burst with redoubled fury o'er the plain.
 'Tis bleak and cold, dreary and comfortless—
 I feel my pow'rs decay, my prospects fade,
 And nature puts her deepest livery on,
 As if in sorrow for my fatal doom:
 While fickle man, who when I first appear'd,
 Shouted my welcome, parts without a sigh;
 Though at my birth, like all my predecessors,
 I was announc'd with joy and merriment,
 Ringing of bells, and ev'ry show of mirth;
 But now he almost pushes me away,

And is impatient for another year,
 Another, and a happier, as he thinks.
 So like the monarch, at his latest hour
 Left by ungrateful courtiers, I must die,
 Alone, unaided, and without a friend.

[*Singing at a distance.*]

What joyous notes, to these wild woods unknown,
 Salute my ear, and mock my tott'ring throne?—

BOYS.

(*Singing without.*)

Joyous CHRISTMAS! hail to thee,
 Friend of youthful mirth and glee!
 Thou art come to close the year,
 CHRISTMAS, friend of mirth, appear!

Enter a band of beautiful boys, each carrying a branch of mistletoe, drawing CHRISTMAS, attired as an English farmer, in a chariot, profusely decorated with holly, ivy, mistletoe, and laurel.

1st BOY.

Do not close thy eyes in sadness,
 Lo! we come thy age to cheer;

Sorrow must give way to gladness,
For thy darling son is here.

CHORUS.

Joyous CHRISTMAS! hail to thee,
Friend of youthful mirth and glee;
Thou art come to close the year,
CHRISTMAS, friend of mirth, appear!

*[Christmas descends from his car, and
approaches the Old Year.]*

CHRISTMAS.

Come, cheer thee in thy age, and raise thy head;
Sink not in sadness 'midst these lonesome woods,
But seek the shelter of the noble hall,
Where the yule block* already blazes high,
And the long table groaning with a load
Of princely fare, awaiting thy approach,
Set round with smiling faces, all conspire
To sooth thy weary age, and cast a gleam
Of golden sunshine o'er thy latter end.
I will attend thee, cheer thy latest hour,
Light up thy countenance with harmless mirth,

* An immense block of wood, or root of a tree, placed on the fire in farm houses on Christmas eve.

Thy last behest fulfil, and all thy wrongs
 Whisper to thy successor's youthful ear.
 Haste, for I see the stormy clouds approach,
 And the white snow-flakes quiver on the wind;
 A countless multitude whirl high aloft,
 And now enwreath the polish'd holly's head,
 Hiss on thy fire, and thickly strew the ground;
 O, mount the car with me!

OLD YEAR.

Beloved son,
 My only refuge in this hour of gloom,
 Gladly I'll spend my latest days with thee,
 And breathe my admonitions in thy ear.
 My sage experience shall direct thy mind
 To spend in cheerfulness this hallow'd time;
 And thy bright smile shall charm me to forget
 September's cheerless fogs, November's gloom,
 And dull December's surly wrinkled brow.

*[They enter the chariot, and move off
 in a shower of snow.]*

CHORUS OF BOYS.

What, though wintry storms appear,
 Hemming in the waning year;

What's the storm, to him who knows
Where to *shelter* from the snows ?

What, though cold envelops all;
What, though snows incessant fall;
We the cold and snows despise :—
Why ?—our *home* before us lies !

Home ! for thy sweet name we'll bear
Sleet, and hail, and frosty air ;
Home and CHRISTMAS ! doubly sweet,
Long expected, now we meet !

Haste ! pile high the blazing fire,
Heap the crackling faggots higher ;
Home and CHRISTMAS ! doubly dear,
Close in love the fading year.

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

Scene.—An antique hall. Company discovered at a banquet.

1st GIRL.

CHRISTMAS ! dear delightful season !

Through the year expected long,
Now we hail thee, and, with reason,
Raise the eulogizing song !

Oft amidst the harsh vexation,
Oft amidst the frown severe,
Fancy's fond anticipation,
Whisper'd—CHRISTMAS will be here !

When from loving friends we parted,
Ev'ry thing in order set ;
Sad we murmur'd, broken hearted,
Ah ! 'tis long to CHRISTMAS yet.

When some friend a passing visit
Gave us, still amidst our play,

We exclaim'd, "O, tell me, is it
Long to happy CHRISTMAS-DAY?"

Now, surpassing expectation,
In thy presence we are free ;
And with joyful acclamation,
We ascribe due praise to thee !

CHRISTMAS.

Thanks, gentle maiden, for thy pleasing song,
That breathes a tender feeling : may you long
Enjoy my visits, and improve with care
The intervening time, that no reproach
May fall on me ; and I in duty bound,
Nor prompted less by love, shall still advance
To bring you joy, in time's revolving dance.

OLD YEAR.

I now propose a prize, to him who best
Amidst this joyous company, shall speak
In praise of CHRISTMAS, or describe his charms,
Or name the omens of his near approach.
Six days indulgence as my prize I give,
To spend in rational enjoyments ; these
The sharpest Cynic scarcely would disclaim ;
And for his fare, I vow it shall be such

As mitred abbots in their Gothic halls,
 And holy bishops of the church, were wont
 At this same kindly season to enjoy;
 Ere laymen, envious of the goodly store,
 Gave notice of ejectment to the monks,
 And routed CHRISTMAS from those goodly cells.
 Come!—who begins?

Signs of Christmas.

1st BOY.

When on the barn's thatch'd roof is seen
 The moss in tufts of liveliest green,
 When Roger to the wood pile goes,
 And as he turns, his fingers blows,
 When all around is cold and drear,
 Be sure that CHRISTMAS-TIDE is near.

When up the garden walk in vain
 We seek for Flora's lovely train,
 When the sweet hawthorn bower is bare,
 And bleak and cheerless is the air,
 When all seems desolate around,
 CHRISTMAS advances o'er the ground.

When Tom at eve comes home from plough,
 And brings the misletoe's green bough,

With milk-white berries spotted o'er,
 And shakes it the sly maids before,
 Then hangs the trophy up on high,
 Be sure that CHRISTMAS-TIDE is nigh.

When Hal, the woodman, in his clogs,
 Bears home the huge unwieldy logs,
 That, hissing on the smould'ring fire,
 Flame out at last a quiv'ring spire ;
 When in his hat the holly stands,
 Old CHRISTMAS musters up his bands.

When cluster'd round the fire at night,
 Old William talks of ghost and sprite,
 And as a distant out-house gate
 Slams by the wind, they fearful wait,
 While some each shadowy nook explore,
 Then CHRISTMAS pauses at the door.

When Dick comes shiv'ring from the yard,
 And says the pond is frozen hard,
 While from his hat, all white with snow,
 The moisture trickling drops below ;
 While carols sound, the night to cheer,
 Then CHRISTMAS and his train are here.



OLD YEAR.

The rural muse is thine, my boy, and well
 Thy lay deserves a gift; nor shall it go
 Entirely unrewarded; but who next
 His claim advances for the promis'd prize?

2nd BOY.

Hark! I hear the horn blow; and I know by the
 trample,
 The old Norwich coach comes oppress'd down
 the street,
 With geese, ducks, and pheasants, and turkies so
 ample,
 The corporate body of London to treat.

I must run, for my cousins were all to be in it;
 And St. Paul's is now striking, I vow and de-
 clare;
 I can't stop to linger the eighth of a minute,
 Or else I shall be all too late for the fair.

Well! well! here they are! 'Hallo, porter!'—
 'dear cousins,
 Here's something of life!'—'take these boxes
 away!'

'I'll shew you the wonders of London by dozens!'

'Coach! to Lincoln's Inn Fields haste directly
away!'

'Here's rattle and gaiety,—tell me how's Ranger;
How's uncle and aunt, and the bombazin trade?
I suppose I should now be in Norwich a stranger,
Though in town, I assure you, a dashing young
blade.

'The CHRISTMAS I spent in your city was pleasant;
And if there's in London a taste of good cheer,
Though sweet was your wild-duck, and turkey,
and pheasant,
You shan't have to say there was less of it here.'

OLD YEAR.

Thy light inspiring muse has waken'd up
Old recollections of the queen of trade,
That stretches out her countless vessels round
The circling oceans;—should the prize be thine,
Full leave is given you to spend the time
(If such your wish) within the clanging sound
Of London's far seen beacon—great St. Paul's.
What young competitor advances now?

3rd BOY.

My clothes were all pack'd up,
 The sun had gone below ;
 I only had to sup ;
 O, how I long'd to go !
 But twelve long hours must intervene,
 Ere I could leave Gram-gothic Green.

I went indeed to bed,
 And dream'd, or thought I did,
 That rising by my bed,
 From underneath the lid
 Of my large corded trunk, a face
 And figure stood upon the place.

Methought I welcom'd him,
 But he look'd sad at me ;
 Gigantic was each limb,
 And, as the surfy sea,
 White was his long depending hair ;
 His garments azure, his feet bare.

And in his lifted hand
 He grasp'd a massive tree,
 Which as I closely scann'd,
 The holly seem'd to be ;

But on the boughs ~~no~~ berries red
Were hung, but puddings hung instead.

And on his head was pil'd
A pyramid of snow,
Which, with emotion wild,
Methought he threw below,
And furious dash'd upon my bed:
The rev'rend honours of his head.

Stunn'd with the shock and ~~snow~~,
I woke; but all was still,
Around, above, below;
I listen'd long, until
Tir'd I sank down in sleep, and then
Saw the same figure rise again.

But now he seem'd to ride,
And blew a dismal horn,
While from his hand and side
The holly-tree was torn;
He mutter'd as he rode along,
And this the burden of his song:---

"Sleep on, sleep on, my boy,
I haste away from thee,
For CHRISTMAS brings no joy,
Since I am now to ~~rest~~:

I call thee not, and you in vain
Will try to follow in my train."

His horn again he blew;
The slogan shrill and sad,
Unnerv'd me; up I flew,
As day was dawning, glad
To find the vision vain; but, lo!
In came a messenger of woe.

His hand a letter bore;
The superscription ran
For me, and soon I tore
It open;—then the plan
Was soon unfolded—I must stay
At school, and mope the time away.

They sent their love, indeed;
But what was love to me,
Who trusted to be freed,
And blest with liberty?
So, sad and sulky, down I sat,
And roll'd, for penance, on the mat.

When, strange vicissitude!
My uncle's voice I heard:
A different scene ensu'd;
His kindness had conferr'd

An invitation to his dome;
And thus, like Cæsar, here I come!

OLD YEAR.

Like Cæsar may you conquer, when, like him,
You can bear disappointment: to lament
At one depression of the varying wheel
Of hood-wink'd fortune, is indeed to weep
At every cloud that flits along the sky.
Joy treads so closely on pale sorrow's steps,
We scarce believe our senses, for as oft
As the sly hare that doubles from the hounds,
Pale sorrow turns, and damps our joys again.
But, O! 'tis wise, believe me, when nor joy
Can cause the cup of reason to o'erflow,
Nor sorrow, rob'd in tears, can droop the soul
Into servility; but, stern in grief,
We can collected stand, and dare the world;
Or, rather, trusting in His kindly aid
Who ne'er deserts his children, calm resign
To his impartial reign, our hopes and fears.
Be for the future firm.—One trial more
Must end the contest; who now claims the wreath?

4th BOY.

CHRISTMAS is worthy of the lay;
I take the lyre, and I obey

18

The verse-inspiring muse;
But I shall tread on higher ground,
And touch a chord of nobler sound,
And deeper thoughts infuse.

For precedent to spend this time,
I ask not monk, or monkish rhyme;
Their feasts or vigils I
Alike regard not; but to spend
This time aright, my lays I bend
Its origin to try.

The heavenly hallelujahs came
From cherubim like dazzling flame,
On this auspicious morn;
To man, to favour'd man they flew,
And cry'd within the shepherds' view,
"This day a Saviour's born!"

Glowing, I catch the heav'nly sound,
A Saviour's come with glory crown'd!
He comes to heal and save!
The chorus borne along the sky,
Proclaims beneath heav'n's arches high,
The conqueror of the grave.

A Saviour! O, delightful theme!
It promises and gives supreme,

Ineffable delight!
 Sin, sorrow, death, will all be o'er,
 And we shall land on that blest shore
 Where faith is lost in sight.

Then shall I ever cease to pay,
 While life remains, on this blest day,
 The grateful tribute due?
 No; while I feel my Saviour dear,
 While by his words my course I steer,
 His path I'll keep in view.

OLD YEAR.

Thou hast deserv'd the prize, if such a prize
 Is worth acceptance; thou hast well declar'd
 This joyous celebration, and thy lyre
 Has sounded sweetly to the noble theme.
 'Tis well to have foundation for our joy;
 To mix grave thoughts at intervals among
 Our social rallies, and redeem the time,
 Lest folly steal the precious hours away,
 And leave us lighten'd of our choicest pearl.
 But hark! what new competitors are these?

[*Singing heard without.*]

Ha! carol-singers! let us hear their lay.

CAROL I.

(Heard without.)

Thus sang the angel in that festal hour,
 The dazzling angel, rob'd in light and pow'r:—
 "Fear not, I bring you tidings of great joy,
 Which shall all nations and all tribes employ.

"To you in David's ancient city born,
 A Saviour rises on this happy morn;
 This sign awaits you—in a manger laid,
 You'll find the babe in swaddling clothes array'd."

'Twas past the noon of night, when thus the strain
 Burst on the shepherds from th' etherial train;
 A mighty chorus follow'd,—“Peace on earth,
 Good-will to men, from this auspicious birth.”

The wond'ring shepherds on the concave gaz'd,
 Where in the east seraphic splendors blaz'd;
 The chorus sounded still—“All praise on high,
 Peace and good-will to all beneath the sky.”

Then from their flocks they rose with one accord,
 To hail Messiah, their redeeming Lord;
 Him in a manger, as foretold, they found,
 His infant brow with lambent glories crown'd.

Hail to the Anointed King, whose reign began
 With peace and happiness to fallen man!
 O! spread the enraptur'd song! let all combine
 To praise the wonders of his love divine.

CHRISTMAS.

Open the door, and let the songsters in;
 All guests are welcome on this festal night,
 And we shall hear again their welcome strain.

*Enter a group of young Maidens, decorated with
 white ribbands, who proceed two and two to the upper
 end of the hall.*

CHRISTMAS.

Thanks, gentle maidens, for your song; again
 Tune for our guests the pleasing choral strain.

[Maidens form in a row, and sing.]

MAIDENS.—CAROL II.

Lo! the sages come from far,
 Guided by the blazing star!

See its radiant lustre spread,
O'er the manger's humble bed.

See the kings their gifts unfold,
Spices, myrrh, refulgent gold;
Lowly bending they adore,
While their presents strew the floor.

Who is this, whose radiant blaze
Lights the east with fearful rays?
Where is he, who, born a king,
Seraphim his triumphs sing?

Where's the virgin-born? the seed
Friendly to the bruised reed:
Mighty branch! the Prince of Peace!
Whose renown shall never cease!

This is he, whose little head
Rests upon a manger's bed;
This is he, whose starry guide
Led the sages to his side.

Lowly now the King appears,
And a servant's vesture wears;
But, as oft foretold, his reign
Shall encompass earth and main.

He shall reign, and he shall rise,
 Glorious through the radiant skies;
 His dominion shall increase
 Till the earth is fill'd with peace.

OLD YEAR.

Sit down, fair maidens, and refresh yourselves
 With CHRISTMAS fare. Your strains have length-
 en'd out

Our social evening, and within our minds
 Rais'd hallow'd feelings: now let each retire;
 But ere we sink immers'd in sweet repose,
 One strain we'll raise to end the happy night.

CHORUS.

The evening now wanes, but before we retire,
 In union we'll draw round the heart-cheering fire;
 And, grateful for favors, and cheer'd with delights,
 Still hail at this season the days and the nights.

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

Scene.—The front of the Mansion.

CHRISTMAS, and the Old Year.

OLD YEAR.

THE morn was sweetly shining,
When from my couch I rose,
Her silver beams reclining
Upon the sparkling snows.

Her chariot glided slowly
Among the fleecy clouds;
Now half immers'd, now wholly,
Amid the vapoury shrouds.

And now, resplendent sailing
Upon the starry sky,
Like eastern queens unveiling
Their shaded majesty.

I gaz'd, with sad emotion,
 Upon the starry sky,
 And thought upon the ocean
 Of vast eternity.

I thought of scenes and troubles,
 And joys for ever gone;
 And life's fantastic bubbles,
 Still hurrying giddy on.

I thought my time was closing;
 That all would soon be o'er;
 And I in peace reposing,
 To be awake no more.

CHRISTMAS.

Cheer up, Old Year, the last days are the best;
 Youth is a dream; we scarcely understand
 What we perceive,—'tis novel and untried;
 And even vig'rous manhood often falls
 In perils and disasters; sober age
 Alone can bear the test; experience then
 Checks rash presumption, foolish phantoms fly
 Before the glass of truth, we feel our way,
 And tread the wilderness with courage firm,
 While youth looks up, and asks our friendly aid.
 And, like the sailor who has run aground,

And 'scap'd as by a miracle, we know
 Full well to counsel, where to shun the rock,
 Avoid the quicksand, and in safety steer
 To the desired haven.

OLD YEAR.

Ah! and when
 We would enjoy the profit of our pains,
 Stern death appears, and, with remorseless hand,
 Forces our exit.

CHRISTMAS.

Yes; but then we go
 Crown'd with our laurels: when our part is done,
 Why need we linger? and if rugged thorns,
 Instead of laurels, pierce our temples sore,
 If in the path of duty they were gain'd,
 Still honour casts her lambent light around
 Our wounded head; and if our time be short,
 If in that time the allotted task was done,
 We nobly quit our charge.—But now retire
 To yonder hall array'd in verdure bright,
 Where our young train, to end in honour due
 Your latest evening, have prepar'd the feast,
 And wait our coming.

[*Exeunt.*]

Scene changes to the Hall.

*The Old Year, CHRISTMAS, Boys, Girls, &c. &c.
form a large circle round the antique fire-place, where
an immense wood fire blazes bright.*

1st BOY.

Oft have I chas'd the butterfly,
Beneath bright June's delightful sky,
From field to copse, from copse to wood,
The lovely insect I pursu'd.

Her beauteous colours tempted me
Along the cowslip sprinkl'd lea;
And by the windings of the brook,
Eager my wayward course I took.

But when I threw my hat at last,
And thought I held the treasure fast,
Surpris'd I saw above my head,
Far far away the insect fled.

Methinks 'tis like the gliding year,
So soon about to disappear;
Its distant beauties urg'd me on,
I follow'd—now they're all but gone.

Imagination painted strong
 The scenes of pleasure bright and long;
 And now I've run the arduous chase,
 At once they fly from my embrace.

CHORUS.

Bright was our course, our pathway bright,
 O'er sunny field, and woody height,
 And lovely were the scented flowers
 We cull'd in those delightful hours.

But, ah! those scenes for ever past,
 We take our parting glance at last;
 Unconscious, while we view the prize,
 It flies before our wond'ring eyes.

CHRISTMAS.

Old Year, you know our love; we would improve
 The last few minutes of your measur'd stay,
 In social converse; chief it would delight
 To hear your history, the scenes you've past,
 Your bright anticipations, griefs and joys,
 The varied landscapes of your changeful course,

OLD YEAR.

The sands of my last hour are running fast,
 Too fast to leave sufficient time to tell
 All I have notic'd in my swift career,
 Of tempest, hurricane, and rolling flood,
 Destructive fire, and desolating war,
 Famine and pestilence, and cold and death;
 Or e'en the gay festivities of life,—
 Marriage, and banqueting, and mirth, and song,
 Fete and procession, and delirious joy,
 And all the strange vicissitudes of fate!
 Yet, not to disappoint your fair request,
 I will retrace my own eventful path,
 And faintly sketch, as memory will permit,
 The varied stages of my devious course.

Recollections of the Old Year.

I well remember, when, with rapid flight,
 Impetuous Time his summons brought to me;
 I sprang exulting through the snow-flakes light,
 And blest the morn of my nativity.

The bells struck up from many a moss-worn tow'r,
 Nor frosty-mantled Janus durst oppose;

Memory still lingers o'er that joyous hour,
 Though rob'd in dreary storms and wintry
 snows.

But soon deserted by the joyous throng,
 Alone I trod through February's day,
 With nought to speed the weary hours along,
 Save day and night's alternate varied sway.

But soon awaking from that silent trance,
 Impetuous March his sounding trumpet blew;
 Whirl'd me around in many a dizzy dance,
 And o'er the crackling woods terrific flew.

Then April pour'd her torrents o'er my head,
 Yet sooth'd me with the opening vernal flow'r;
 And though before me brighter scenes have
 spread,
 They yield not to that sweet bewitching hour.

Yet was fair May the fav'rite of my train;
 Delightful May! so blooming and so fair!
 She wreath'd with lovely flow'rs the lab'ring
 swain,
 And fill'd with odoriferous scents the air.

Then through the fields of June I took my flight;
 Through the green woods I wander'd oft and
 long;

Slept by the streamlet in the still short night,
And listen'd to the nightingale's sweet song.

Those were my day of joy; beneath alcoves
Studded with moss, and shelter'd from the heat,
In hot July's umbrageous linden groves,
The mellow fruits refresh'd my deep retreat.

I watch'd the reapers in the golden field,
The loud hallo, the crackling of the wain,
The rising moon's resplendent beamy shield,
I recollect in August's sultry reign.

Rous'd by the gun beneath September's sway,
The echoing groves and forest scenes I fled;
Mourn'd as I pass'd the swift retreating day,
And in the mantling vapours hid my head.

Pleas'd with October's parti-colour'd glow,
Again I trod the solemn forest glades;
While o'er the scene the gorgeous colour'd bow,
Deck'd with illusive pomp the brown arcades.

November chill then rais'd his wither'd hand,
Bade ev'ry leaf and ev'ry flower retire;
And, shrinking at his stern and harsh command,
I shiv'ring wander'd to the cheering fire.

Now in December's arms I sink at last,
 My frame grows languid, and my vitals freeze;
 I hear the mutt'ring of the distant blast,
 I feel the symptoms of my near decease.

CHRISTMAS.

Haste! bring a cordial! Ah! what noise was
 that?

[*A loud knocking heard without.*]

*Enter Time, with his usual appendages of hour-glass
 and scythe.*

TIME.

Haste! I can no more delay,
 Aged Year—away, away!
 With the years for ever fled,
 Thou must soon be numbered.

Haste! upon the wings of night
 Take your long eternal flight;
 Never to revisit more
 Earth's inhospitable shore.

Haste! I can no more delay,
 Time is come, and cannot stay;

Time, whose with'ring touch devours
 Richest temples, loftiest tow'rs.

Haste! your record of the past
 Bring, then mount upon the blast,
 Swifter than the scudding sail;—
 All you leave an evening tale.

Hark! I hear the fatal hour
 Strike from yonder ivy'd tower;
 Haste! I can no more delay,
 Aged Year,—away, away!

*The clock strikes twelve, and the Old Year falls
 insensible to the ground. The Band of Boys raise his
 body on a bier, and, preceded by Time, bear it off in
 slow procession; the Maidens follow two and two,
 singing the following—*

DIRGE.

Bring the last December rose,
 Frosted o'er with wintry snows;
 Let the fading petals fall
 O'er the year's funereal pall.

From the wood some oak leaves bring
 That were green in early spring;

Scatter them about the bier
Of the now departing year.

Let the bells upon their wheels
Ring the solemn midnight peals,
While our fond ideas veer,
Ling'ring o'er the dying year.

Hark! the peal has ceas'd to roll;
Silence reigns: but now a toll
Breaks upon the startled ear,—
Gone for ever is the Year!

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

Scene.—The Hall.

1st BOY.

(Entering at the front door.)

HERE comes the New Year, deck'd in splendour
and brightness,
And crown'd with the snowdrop of beautiful
whiteness;
O'er the new fallen snow he comes gracefully
tripping,
While the moon 'midst the shadowy vapours is
flitting.

He comes, and the bells change their dolorous
peal,
Rung with joy in the buttress-propp'd belfry they
reel;

All hail the new era! and, drowsy with sleep,
With eagerness wait at the stranger to peep.

He comes, and we fancy that with him appears
The collected enjoyments of happier years;
We hail him with joy, nor expect in his train,
To encounter our old disappointments again.

Ah! hid in his garment our destiny lies;
Then let us attend him, and fly as he flies;
Improve every moment our rapid career,
And startle old time with a real New Year!

CHORUS.

Then send round the chorus, with joy let it roll,
Till it seize and exhilarate every soul!
May pain, sin, and sadness, at once disappear,
And to each a bright CHRISTMAS, and happy New
Year.

*Enter the New Year, crowned with a wreath of
snowdrops, and attired in white, with twelve young
Damsels in his train.*

CHRISTMAS.

Hail, New Year!

NEW YEAR.

And hail to thee,
Friend of mirth and social glee!

CHRISTMAS.

Welcome here!
Bring the hallow'd misletoe,
Shake aloft the holly bough,
Bid the wood fire brighter glow;
Hail, New Year.

NEW YEAR.

CHRISTMAS! earliest friend I meet!
Welcome is your greeting sweet!

CHRISTMAS.

Welcome here!
Kiss these damsels fair and bright!
Lovely as the orient light!
Tender as the snow-flake white!
Ever dear!
Bring the hallow'd misletoe,
Kiss them 'neath the unfading bough.

GRAND CHORUS.

Doubly welcome, doubly dear,
 CHRISTMAS, and the young New Year;
 Spread the banquet, raise the song,
 And the happy time prolong.

CHRISTMAS.

This is a happy morn; and, as the kings
 Of ancient Persia did on their new year,
 My royal new year's gifts I will bestow,
 Suited to all, that all may be content.
 I'll treat the moralist with sober thoughts
 Of life's perpetual motion;—o'er the lover
 I'll shake the *berry'd misletoe*, that he
 May long remember CHRISTMAS;—to the son
 Of boasting war, I'll give the *holly leaf*,
 And its *red berries*; such he'll find its meed,—
 A little shew of pomp, and many thorns.
 I'll give the poet *ivy*; for, like it,
 Around the ruin'd pile he ever clings,
 Adorns the loneliest spot with fancy's charms,
 And props the tott'ring column in his rhymes.
 I'll give the scholar *fir*; for he must be,
 Like it, for ever green, erect, and firm,
 And with his needles of philosophy
 Contemn the snows of life. Here's darkening *yea*,

The mourner must have that, who seeks the
 shade,
 And hides his melancholy head in caves,
 Or by the sandy beach, utt'ring aloud
 His dull soliloquies, unseen, unknown.
 Here's *laurel* for the schoolboy, frown who will,
 My own dear schoolboy shall the laurel have!
 Who loves me like the schoolboy? who can wear
 His blushing honours with so meek a grace,
 Untarnish'd and unsullied? O! I love
 My own dear children, on whose healthful brows
 Delighted pleasure and good nature rest.
 Haste! bring the rich plum-cake! the turkey
 bring!
 The smoking puddings! and the nice mince pies!
 While CHRISTMAS lives they ne'er shall want the
 gift,
 The genial banquet, or the smiling home.
 And when, at my decease, they haste away,
 May joy attend them in their old retreats;
 And science, hand in hand with genius bright,
 Conduct them on to wisdom's temple fair!

NEW YEAR.

I'll take your children fair beneath my charge;
 Safely I'll lead them to their destin'd seats,
 Shine on their tasks, their pleasures, and their
 walks,

And cheer their studies with approving smiles.
 And when, in turn, the vernal hours advance,
 I've friends that shall invite them; Easter, then,
 And sportive Whitsuntide shall make them gay,
 Till they forget, in healthful exercise,
 The burdens of the school; and when, at last,
 Another CHRISTMAS shall his treasures bring,
 Enrich'd with knowledge, and to virtue dear,
 Swift rising on to manhood, I shall leave
 The lovely striplings to his genial care.

CHORUS OF BOYS.

FATHER CHRISTMAS! *do not go!*
 Will you leave your children *so*?
 Could we tempt you but to stay,
 How we'd sport the time away!

Mirth in one continued round,
 Should fall giddy to the ground!
 Gaiety for ever dance!
 Light-heel'd frolic ever prance!

Well, it must not always last,
 Thanks we give for what is past;
 Thanks for pleasures that remain,
 Then return to school again.

Doubly welcome, doubly dear,
 CHRISTMAS, and the young New Year!
 Spread the banquet, raise the song,
 And the happy time prolong.

DUET.

When pain droops the garland of life to the
 ground,

When sorrow depresses, and forces the tear,
 Who would not rejoice at the hallowing sound
 Of a sociable CHRISTMAS, and happy New Year?

Though the wheel has roll'd downward, and all
 has been dark,

Though death may have snatch'd some delight
 that was dear;

Hope dies not, but, steering the tremulous bark,
 Casts her anchor once more on another New
 Year.

Though the current of life has roll'd dreary and
 dun,

Though the cloud and the thunderbolt seem'd
 to be near,

There *may* be a glimpse of joy's mellowing sun,
 To brighten the scenes of the fresh coming
 Year.

O, Hope! never leave us; and, guided by thee,
 Neither tempest or wave shall oppose our
 career;
 Like the storm-bird,* unhurt o'er the billows we'll
 flee,
 And with gratitude welcome another New
 Year.

And when at the haven of life we arrive,
 And the angel of death points his cold arrow
 near,
 Faith and Love, thy fair sisters, shall bid us re-
 vive,
 And behold with delight an eternal New Year!

GRAND CHORUS.

Hail! all hail! the New Year brings
 Stores of blessings on its wings;
 May we feel the blessings show'r,
 Ev'ry day and ev'ry hour.

May our vessels, light and trim,
 Gaily down the current swim;
 Nor the breakers' treach'rous roar
 Dash them on the rocky shore.

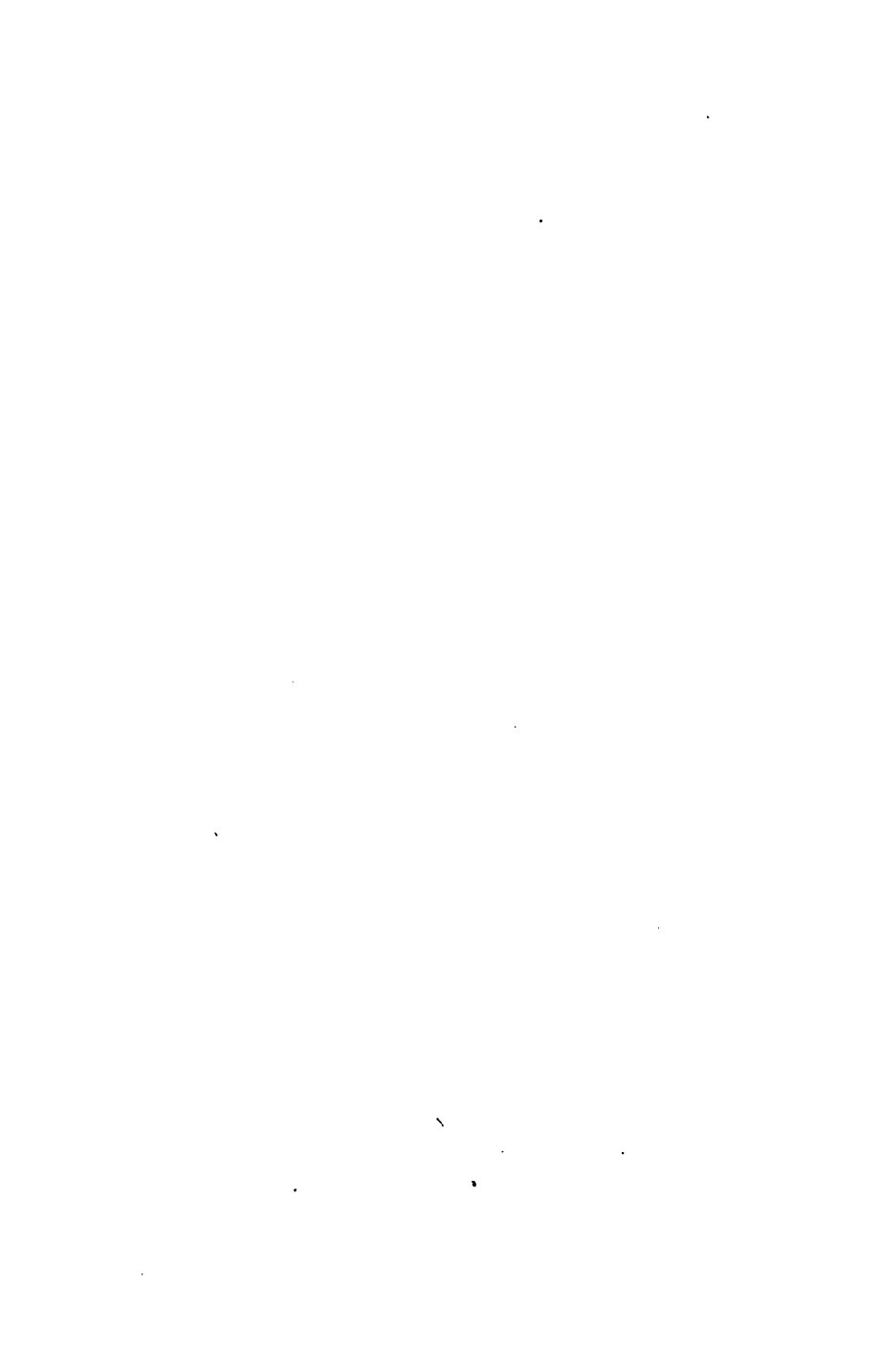
* The stormy Petrel; a sea-bird that is observed to swim
 at its ease amidst the most tempestuous waves.

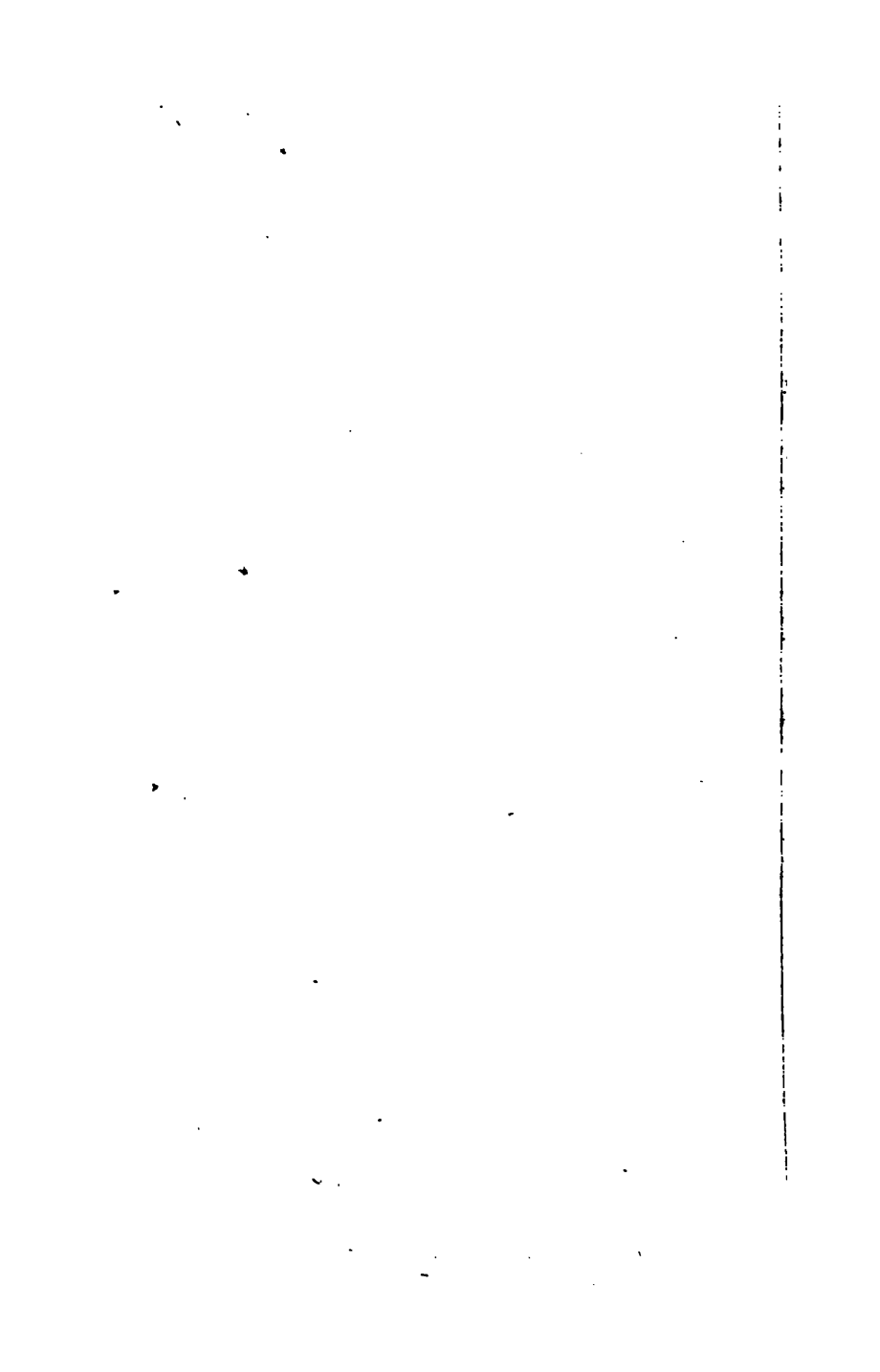
May our path be bright and gay,
On through life's uneven way;
And our part be still to tread
Lightly through the sunny mead.

May our race be fairly run,
Finish'd with the setting sun;
Ev'ry blessing given enjoy'd,
Ev'ry moment well employ'd.

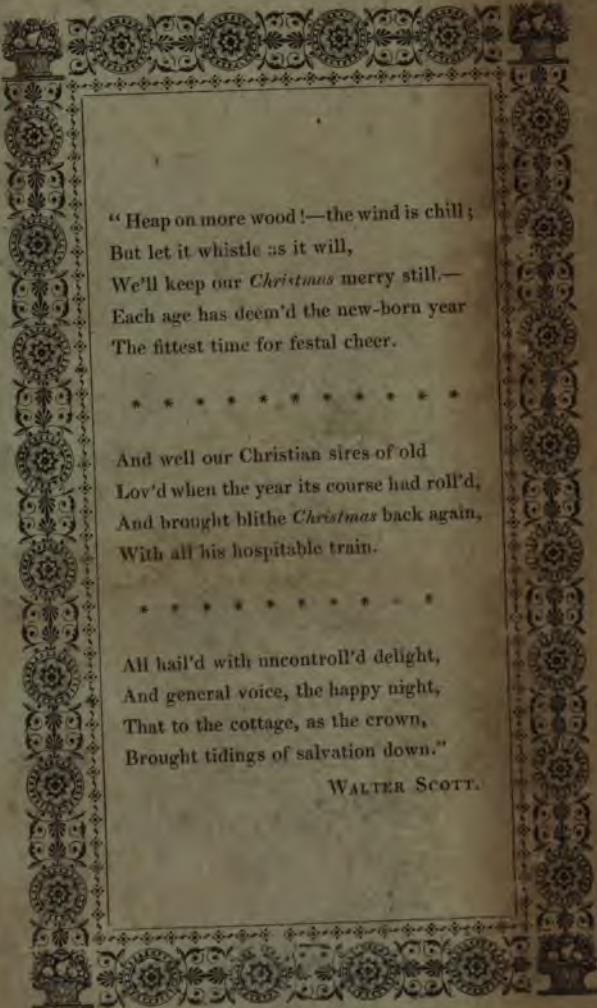
Then, like coursers in the race,
We shall gain the foremost place;
And the year behold us rise,
Crown'd with time and virtue's prize!

FINIS.









“Heap on more wood!—the wind is chill;
But let it whistle as it will,
We’ll keep our *Christmas* merry still,—
Each age has deem’d the new-born year
The fittest time for festal cheer.

* * * * *

And well our Christian sires of old
Lov’d when the year its course had roll’d,
And brought blithe *Christmas* back again,
With all his hospitable train.

* * * * *

All hail’d with uncontroll’d delight,
And general voice, the happy night,
That to the cottage, as the crown,
Brought tidings of salvation down.”

WALTER SCOTT.